The California Natural Diversity Database
Commonly Asked Questions

What is the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)?

The CNDDB is a program within the Department of Fish and Game's Habitat Conservation Division and within the Wildlife & Habitat Data Analysis Branch. The CNDDB's mission is to track the location and condition of California's many species of rare and sensitive plants, animals, and natural communities (e.g., marshes, riparian systems, desert scrub, etc.). These species and natural communities are collectively referred to as "elements." The CNDDB includes in its inventory all federally and state listed plants and animals, all species that are candidates for listing, all species of special concern, and those species that are considered "sensitive" by government agencies and the conservation community. This is a computerized inventory and information is available for a fee in hardcopy and digital forms. The CNDDB is a dynamic system with information continually being added and upgraded. The CNDDB contains over 36,000 locational records for over 3,000 elements.

How is CNDDB information set up or organized?

CNDDB data are organized geographically and taxonomically. Information is retrieved by United States Geological Survey (USGS) map sheet (e.g., typically 1:24,000, 1:100,000, or 1:250,000 scale), or by taxa. Most CNDDB clients request information for USGS 7.5 minute quads. The approximately 49 square miles covered by a single USGS 7.5 minute quad is the smallest area for which we will perform a data retrieval. Due to the nature of our inventory, it is important that our clients query surrounding quads as well as the quads on which their project site or area of interest is located.

What types of information can I obtain?

OVERLAYS & TEXT We can produce computer generated overlays for the 1:24,000-, 1:100,000-, or 1:250,00-scale base maps. Text reports are included only with the USGS 7.5' scale overlays. An Element Table on the USGS 7.5' (1:24,000) overlay provides the following information for each element occurrence: a map feature number, occurrence number, map index number, element code, accuracy class, element count, the common and scientific names, numbers of components, and legend. Most of our clients request overlays for USGS 1:24,000 and 1:100,000 scale maps (map index numbers only with legend for 1:100,000 scale). Overlays cost $30 (standard vellum media) per quad which include text reports, except for *RAREFIND* subscribers (see below).

RAREFIND 2 - We can also make our data available via a microcomputer database application called *RAREFIND 2*. You can obtain our entire statewide data set. *RAREFIND 2* is available on a yearly subscription basis. The cost for the statewide data set is $1,250 for government agencies and nonprofit conservation organizations or $2,500 for commercial clients. A subscription includes an initial set of data with the *RAREFIND 2* application followed by an updated data set 6 months later. The GIS digital layer is also available to subscription customers. Renewing customers are given a 10% discount. *RAREFIND 2* subscribers are also afforded a special overlay price of $20 per quad. *RAREFIND 2* is a compiled, stand alone application that requires a 386 or higher series PC, with 560K free DOS memory and 100 MB free hard disk space. RareFind 2 will run on MS-DOS version 5.0 or higher, Windows 3.1, Windows 95 or NTs. No additional software is required.

How do I order information from the CNDDB?

It is easy to request information from the CNDDB. Call one of our Information Services staff at (916) 324-3812 at to place your order by phone or e-mail us at kbates@dfg.ca.gov. It is most helpful to have the name or names of the 7.5 quad maps for which you want information contact us. We will give you a cost estimate before we proceed with your request.

How long does it take to get information from the CNDDB?

The usual turn around time for data requests is one to two weeks. We ask you to remember that this is a computerized system and it does go down from time to time. Such unforeseen events can interfere with our normal response time.

How do I pay?

You are invoiced directly from our accounting department after the products have been sent to you. You do not need to pay up front; but invoices are due and payable upon presentation—no terms are available. Delinquent accounts will be denied additional services until the balance has been paid.

NOTE: There is a 50% cancellation charge if you cancel your order after we have already processed your request and generated our products. There is a no-return policy on products already delivered.

Why is there a charge for this information?

Our enabling legislation requires that we "insure cost-sharing by all who use the CNDDB, and develop a fee structure to recover actual costs" for its use. The Department of Finance has determined that this will include not only direct costs for generating and distributing our data, but will also include some program overhead. We recover about $225,000 per year in fees, which amount to about 25% of our program costs.

The Wildlife & Habitat Data Analysis' Mission and Vision:

"..to provide high quality scientific information, tools, and expertise needed by Department employees, other public agencies, private organizations, and the public for making informed conservation decisions regarding our biological resources....to serve as the State's clearinghouse for biological data and center for conducting conservation analyses at statewide, regional, and local scales and actively acquire, integrate, improve, and distribute biological resource data and associated spatial data in support of conservation policy and planning needs."